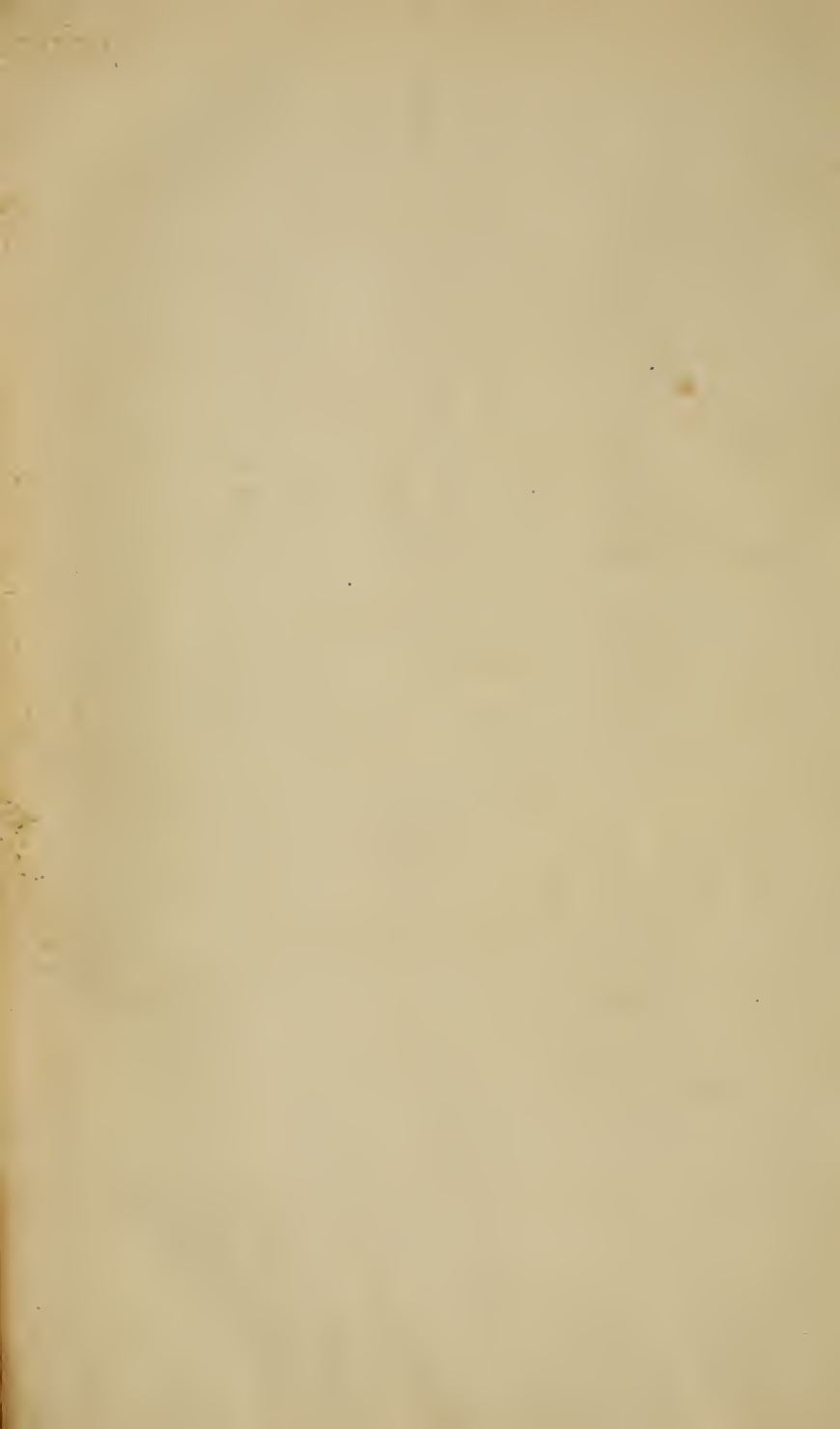




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THE
WARNING OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

A
SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE
PARISH CHURCH OF EAST BRENT, SOMERSET,
ON PALM-SUNDAY, 1850.

BY
GEORGE ANTHONY DENISON, M.A.
VICAR.

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A

S E R M O N,

§c.

REV. iii. 15.

“ I would thou wert cold or hot.”

THE last of the seven Churches has denounced against her the greatest woe. Ephesus, and Pergamos, and Thyatira, and Sardis had been warned unto repentance. The warning of Sardis had been the most severe. Smyrna only and Philadelphia had been found faithful. Laodicea is all but condemned: it is not in her case, as in that of the other Churches warned of the Spirit; it is not in her case, that there was found in her good mingled with evil;—in her it is all evil. “ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

But there is something even beyond this. Laodicea was in the most wretched state, and she knew

it not: her state was not indeed hopeless; for where God's mercy is, none can despair; and the Church, which He had all but rejected, was still called upon to repent. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." But when men are so nigh unto condemnation, and know it not; when they are so far from knowing it, that the very things in them which are the most displeasing to God are the main subjects of their pride and self-gratulation; then is there no case, which, even in the presence of the long-suffering of God, is less full of the blessed hope of repentance and amendment unto life.

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold-tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

Why do I speak thus? why am I, a Priest of the Church of England, seeking to fix your minds, my brethren, at this particular moment of our trial before God, specially upon this great warning of Holy Writ? Is that which was said by the Spirit unto the Church of Laodicea true then, in all its awful import, of the Church of England in these latter days? God

forbid, brethren, that I should say it. He, indeed, who is the great Head of all the Churches of the earth, past, present, and to come; He hath, doubtless, “a few things,”—alas! it may be, He hath many things,—“against” us. But there are signs and tokens many and marvellous of His presence with us still; signs and tokens that He hath not rejected us; signs and tokens of His loving-kindness towards us; signs and tokens that He is enabling us more and more to be faithful, yea even “unto death,” and so to “hold fast that we have, that no man take our crown.”

But who shall say that there is not very much in our case, in the case of the Church of England, generally, and of the particular members of that Church, in these days of rebuke and blasphemy, like unto the case of the Church of Laodicea? Blind indeed must we be to the signs of the times all over the earth; careless and unobservant of that fatal spirit of doubt and disbelief and questioning of God’s truth, which is stealing its way very rapidly amongst ourselves, as though it belonged to every man to decide for himself whether what has been revealed unto men in Holy Writ be the truth or no, as though the word of God had not long ago declared it, and the Church had not witnessed unto it, and the Holy Ghost had not sealed it; blind, I say, brethren, must we be to all these things, if we think that what is here said by the Spirit unto the Church of Laodicea is not said to us. Worse than blind if

we think that "we are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; if we know not that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." For who shall say that it is not true that, in respect of many things which do touch most closely the life of God in the soul of man, we, of the Church of England, are "neither cold nor hot?" Who shall say that it is not the fact, that the spirit of indifference to God's revealed truth, to the "one Faith," once "committed unto the Saints," that most subtle, perhaps, of all the spirits of evil, is walking abroad amongst us, and day by day is destroying the souls for whom Christ died? and we are blind and will not see; or, in the pride of reason and resistance to the teaching of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, we are welcoming the spirit of lukewarmness and indifference to that home where Christ alone should dwell, and are permitting him more and more to pollute by his unhallowed presence the temple of the Holy Ghost?

There are three states of mind in respect of the holding of God's revealed truth, and the keeping of God's laws—three states of mind, as set before us in this passage of the Bible. Before, however, we consider what these states of mind are, we must bear in mind very carefully, brethren, that the holding of God's revealed truth, and the keeping of God's laws, cannot be separated the one from the other. The true keeping of God's laws in our daily life and conversation, can only be where there is the holding,

whole and undefiled, the Catholic faith. There may be many kinds of life and conversation which may look like the true one to human eyes; but as God's truth is one, so the life of God in the soul of man is one, and depends upon and flows from that one truth. The spirit of indifference has many poisonous cups which he offers to our lips, and which, like the fruit of the forbidden tree, which "brought death into the world and all our woe," are "pleasant to the eye, and seem good for food, and to be desired to make one wise;" but there is no one which is more readily accepted at his hands—no one more deadly to drink than that cup which is filled with the draught of the pride of human reason, and the persuasion that it matters little what a man believes so long as he lives what is called a good life¹. Bear we then in mind, and hold it fast always, that the holding of God's truth, and the keeping of God's laws, cannot be separated the one from the other. The first is "faith," the second is "good works;" and "good works" do "spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit²."

The three states of mind of which I speak are described in this passage, where He, "the Amen, the Faithful Witness, the First and the Last," is speaking to St. John. Those who are "hot,"

¹ Article XIII.

² Article XII.

those who are “cold,” those who are “neither hot nor cold,” but “lukewarm;” and it is told us very plainly that the last state is the worst of the three. “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

What is intended by this figure? First, then, to be “hot” is, plainly, to be zealous for God’s honour and for the preservation of the faith; to be ardent, eager, earnest-minded; to have the head filled with one idea, and the heart with one feeling; to be disposed to give up all things, yea life itself, for the truth’s sake: of the three states of mind it is doubtless the best, it is indeed the only one which can be said to be in any degree *good*; but we must not therefore rush to the conclusion, that a mind so disposed, and all that is done by a mind so disposed, is necessarily altogether right and good. Zeal may be in ignorance and unbelief, as was that of Saul when he persecuted the Christians; or misdirected, as was that of the sons of Zebedee when they would have called down fire from heaven upon the village of the Samaritans; or unstable and incapable of resisting a great trial, as was that of Peter before he was “converted;” or it may be rash, and ill-advised in point of time, or circumstance, or mode of action, or all of them; and he who does a thing good in itself in such manner as to mar its good effect, or without the most careful and calm consideration of

the thing itself and of all its consequences, so far as he can judge of them, has doubtless much to answer for before God.

If we take the exact opposites of what has just been said, we shall know what is meant by the cold mind and the cold heart; no religious belief—by consequence no religious practice—much knowledge, it may be, of the world and the things of the world—much indulgence of the flesh—no knowledge of God—no care for others, or for our own souls—no self-denial—no earnestness of mind about heavenly things,—these go to make up the cold mind and the cold heart.

Is there then, can there be, any state *worse* than this? Yes, brethren, “the First and the Last.” He who hath “the keys of hell and of death” hath told us, that there is a state even more and more hopeless than this. “I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

Does it still seem strange and hard to believe that there should be a state of mind more hopeless even than that which openly rejects and disobeys God? Alas! how slow are we to “hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!” Would it not be more humble, and therefore more wise, to meditate upon these things, and so, by God’s mercy, to bring ourselves to acknowledge heartily how true they are, than to doubt and question and dispute about the plain teaching of the word of God?

Those who will thus meditate upon God's word, and upon their own nature, and upon the experience of their own and others' lives, will soon come to learn that, miserable as is the state of the professed disbeliever or the reckless sinner, the state of that man who is ever "halting between two opinions"—who admits that there is a truth, and yet refuses to seek after it—who, in consequence, makes what men fancy to be true, and not the eternal and unchangeable standard of God's law, the measure of the truth—who is outwardly decent because it suits the world, and inwardly vicious because it suits himself—that such a state of heart and mind as this is more hopeless far. It is not in this case, as in the other, that the mind and heart have never acknowledged the presence of truth and the beauty of holiness; but that, at the very moment that both are acknowledged, both are set at nought when weighed against the wisdom of the world, the pride of the intellect, the lusts of the flesh, or the deceitfulness of the heart. "Seest thou," says the wise king of Israel, "seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him." A great miracle may bring the professed unbeliever on his knees—a great visitation may, at last, awake the reckless sinner, if the long-suffering of God shall vouchsafe either one or the other; but what is to bow the knee of him who confesses that such things as miracles have indeed been and may be again, and yet is not convinced thereby in his heart of the superin-

tending and controlling providence of God? What shall move the heart of him who confesses with his lips, that every man that hath in him the hope of heaven, purifieth himself even as Christ is pure, and yet gives himself up to his own heart's lusts, and to the following of his own imaginations? that man hears not Moses and the prophets, *i. e.* he hears them, but does not obey, "neither then will he be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

And now to apply what has been said here to the present unhappy position of the Church of England.

There is, in the Church of England—and it has been the growth of many causes, into which I cannot enter now—a very great amount of lukewarmness in respect of the revealed truths of God. The Faith is not, indeed, denied, but neither is it held as the rule of life; belief amongst us lacks reality, it lacks depth and truth. In this respect it must be confessed that the Church of England is "neither cold nor hot," but "lukewarm," as was said by the Spirit of the Church of Laodicea. And is there no danger in such a state? "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches:"—"I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Oh, my brethren, believe me, our danger is exceeding great; there is, in a great number of the members of the Church of England, a very great indifference as to the exact things to be believed as necessary to salvation: their belief is vague,

general, confused, indistinct; and this indistinctness has extended itself to the education, and by consequence to the teaching of the Clergy. The great doctrines of the faith are not taught, and therefore not apprehended by the people with sufficient clearness—they are not linked the one with the other in such sort as to help to build up in the mind one uniform and connected system of belief, to be the foundation of all their practice. There is very often considerable warmth and earnestness about that practice, and therein many signs of religious feeling; but the foundation is insecure and unsound—it is composed rather of the ever-changing and perishable materials of human opinion, than of the doctrine of Christ as committed to the keeping of the Church, to be preserved by the Church unto the end of time; and upon this foundation are built many buildings—“gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;” the foundation is insecure and unsound; and as is the foundation, so is the building which is built thereon.

No one who has watched with any care the state of the religious mind of this people, can fail to have observed the presence of this lukewarmness in respect of matters of faith. No one, again, who will meditate upon the inseparable connexion between “faith” and “good works,” will refuse to allow that such lukewarmness is a great stain upon, and a sad defect in, our religious character. And by all such as will so meditate, is heard the warning voice of the

Spirit, "I would that thou wert cold or hot." We are, most of us, "neither hot nor cold," we are "lukewarm," or are indifferent, not so much in respect of practice, but in respect of belief. But, once more, brethren, true Christian practice must flow from true Christian belief; it can have no other source. If, then, we be indifferent about our belief, we shall be deceiving ourselves even about our practice: and a proof of this may be observed in the fact, that it is only where there is firm, and steady, and consistent belief, that there is firm, and steady, and consistent practice. But most of us do not deal with matters of belief in this way; we take the truth—*God's truth, and not man's*—not simply as God has committed it to His Church, but in a thousand various ways and shapes, according to our own fancies and opinions. And each successive generation multiplies this great evil, for the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children; and all the political and social circumstances of the country combine to foster and increase, and to make it every day more and more plausible: and the evil example of other countries is fast telling upon us; and the warnings supplied by the miserable religious and social state of other countries are thrown away upon us; so that men might well have "wondered whereunto this would grow," and have looked on with the deepest alarm and distress, to what threatened, at no distant day, to subvert here in England, the very foundation of the faith itself, even if, in the mysterious course of

the providence of God, it had not come to pass, in the year of our redemption 1850, that a blow has fallen upon the Church of England when she least expected it—a blow which has brought the whole matter to a direct issue.

Brethren, in this great and almost crushing blow, the warning has once more been given us; a warning brought home to ourselves, to our homes, to our hearts, to all that is most near and dear to us—a warning, alas! it may be, vouchsafed now, *for the last time*. “I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches:”—“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

A decision has been given in the Supreme Court of Appeal of the Church of England, which has reversed the decision of the ordinary Church court, and which tells the people of England that their Church allows them to believe two things, the exact opposites the one of the other touching the Holy

Sacrament of Baptism ; a decision which tells the people of England that a Minister who teaches his people, *according to* the Catholic faith, that their children *are* regenerate or born again in, and by the grace of, Holy Baptism ; and a Minister who teaches his people, *contrary to* the Catholic faith, that their children *are not* regenerate, or born again in, and by the grace of, Holy Baptism, but in and by something else,—whereof Holy Scripture and the Church are wholly silent,—that these two ministers are, *both of them, equally fit* to have cure of souls, and to teach in the Church of England.

It is not, perhaps, necessary for me to explain here at length, after what I have already said, how it is that, under the peculiar temptations which beset us in these latter days, such a decision, however injurious to the plain common sense of the English people, is, nevertheless, of all the possible decisions which could have been given, filled with temptations at once the most subtle and the most dangerous to us all.

I need hardly say to you, my brethren, with what alarm and sorrow and deep distress I regarded the possibility of such a decision as this for a length of time before it was given. You know how I have always, since I became your Minister, endeavoured to set before you the true doctrine of Holy Baptism ; how I have endeavoured, however unworthily and imperfectly, and if not in every way open to me, yet in many ways, “to banish and drive away from

among you all erroneous and strange doctrine" in respect of this Holy Sacrament. I have, indeed, for many years past, been full of deep anxiety on the particular point now at issue in the Church of England, because I could not help seeing that very many of us were "neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm," in respect of this great doctrine,—*a doctrine which is the foundation of all true belief*; but I had not anticipated (who indeed could have anticipated?) a decision like this—a decision which, besides that it gives formal legal sanction to the teaching of false doctrine, is injurious to the plain common sense of the English people. When, however, there appeared too much reason to fear that the decision would be to the great harm and loss of the Catholic faith of the Church of England, though I knew well that no Court would, *as yet*, be found to say that regeneration in Holy Baptism was *not* the doctrine of the Church of England, I much feared what has actually come to pass—though even then, till it did come to pass, I could scarcely think it possible—I much feared that the Court would say, as they have said, that there is room for *two* doctrines in respect of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, the exact opposites the one of the other, in the Church of England: the Court, indeed, and those who approve of its decision, do not appear to be aware of what they have done, as is very commonly the case when men, under cover of what is specious and plausible, and from fear of the consequences, decide against the truth. What

is it, then, that they have done?—it is this, brethren, they have in effect and in reality affirmed that the Church of England has *no doctrine at all of Holy Baptism*. It will be plain, I think, at once, to any of you, who will give the matter a little serious thought, that it is *not possible* that *two* doctrines in respect of any part of God's eternal Truth, the exact opposites the one of the other, can be equally true; that to admit the one must be to deny the other; that to admit both is to admit neither; that the Church, therefore, which admits both these opposites has in effect no doctrine at all.

It was, therefore, with a great weight and burthen on my conscience, as the teacher of the people of this place, as charged to do all that in me lies to bring up their children to be sound in the Faith, as bound by my ordination vow to be “ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word,”—it was with this weight and burthen on my conscience, that I lost no time in making public, at the earliest opportunity after the judgment was given, two Protests³, prepared previously after much deliberation and consultation with others; one against the power to decide in matters of doctrine, which, however disclaimed, has been fully and unequivocally exercised by the civil authorities, a power which, by the law of Christ, belongs only to the Spirituality of

³ Appendix A.

His Church ; the other against the particular decision in this particular case, as involving in heresy all who should knowingly and wilfully concur therein. I took this step in no hurry, irritation, or excitement : if the decision had not done, as it has done, injury and dishonour to Christ and His holy Church, I should have equally made the *first* of the two Protests,—that against the power to decide in matters of doctrine exercised by the civil authorities, though *in that case* there would have been no room for the *second* ; but when the decision came, I was compelled to make *both* Protests, as one step, however feeble and unworthy, towards providing a remedy for the great calamity which has befallen the Church of England.

This step I well knew would expose me to great public obloquy, to much censure, much ridicule, many charges of having offended against the laws of Church and State : the obloquy, the censure, the ridicule, the charges, have all come ; brethren, “none of these things move me.” I say here, in this holy place, in the presence of God and of this congregation, I say here, as I have said elsewhere, that I do not, and cannot, in the very smallest degree, regret my act, either the matter or the manner of it ; that I wish no part of it undone, that I deprecate no consequences which may legitimately attach to it.

And, indeed, if I had wanted any justification of what I have done, that justification would be very amply supplied by what fell from the first Minister

of the Crown in the House of Commons on Monday last—he said among other things, after reading to the House a Statement⁴ which I had asked leave to place in his hands—copies of which Statement, together with copies of the two Protests, are lying in the vestry, and I shall be glad to give them to any of you after Service who may wish to have them—he said that the judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council “had,” he believed, “given very general satisfaction.” Alas ! brethren, if this be so, and I much fear that there is great room for the assertion—I much fear that it is at least in some measure true—for if it had not been so the assertion could hardly have been made and received in Parliament—if the people of England, or any great part of them, are, indeed, well satisfied to be told upon authority, that the Church admits two contradictory doctrines in respect of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism; that the Church allows that in one parish a Minister who *holds and teaches* the Catholic Faith is fit for the cure of souls, and that, in the next parish, a Minister who *does not hold or teach* the Catholic Faith, but denies and ridicules it, is equally fit for cure of souls—if these things be indeed so ; if the people of England, or any great part of them, be content that the Church of England should accept, in the place of her own living child, the half of a dead child, divided in twain by the sword of

⁴ Appendix B.

the civil power; then, indeed, if the Church of England is to be saved, if her “ candlestick ” is not to be “ removed out of its place,” it is high time that we should gird up our loins to fight, as Christ’s soldiers, in defence of Christ’s Faith—that “ Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints;” that faith which the Church of England has ever claimed for her own; that Faith which is *one*, as it is said, “ one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;” that Faith which is the most precious inheritance of ourselves and our children. Alas! brethren, it makes me sad, and fills my eyes with tears, to look upon children now; for the thought rises in my heart, what shall be the fruit of this most unhappy decision in its effect upon the young, whose belief has yet to be formed, and fixed, and settled; and who will now hear, for the first time since the Church of England has been a Church—*i. e.* for the first time now for some 1800 years—that the denial, for in truth it is no less, of one great part of the Catholic Faith, of one of the first principles of the doctrines of Christ, is no longer, as before, the act or the word of this or that erring member of the Church, resting upon the abuse of the duty of private judgment in each separate case, but that it has now been formally sanctioned by the decision of a Supreme Court of Appeal, binding both Church and State.

If the Church of England shall not openly and expressly reject what has thus been attempted to be forced upon her by the State, the Church of England

will be committed, openly and expressly, to a denial of the Catholic Faith⁵.

And if we will look carefully to the rules which have guided this decision, and trace it to its consequences, it will not be difficult to see that it is more than one doctrine which is at stake; the loss of one doctrine, indeed, were enough to destroy the Unity of the Faith: but it is right to omit nothing which may serve to startle and awaken men's minds. I would have you, then, consider, brethren, that the same rules which have been found sufficient to enable the Supreme Court of Appeal to get rid of the plain sense of the Prayer Book, and of the other formularies of the Church of England in respect of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, will suffice to the same end in respect of the other Holy Sacrament, and in respect of other great doctrines—the Atonement, the Incarnation—of which, indeed, the doctrine of the Sacraments is but the application to the souls of Christ's people—nay, in respect of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Unity itself: the door that has admitted one heresy is wide enough to admit all.

But do not receive my words, brethren, as though I were saying to you that we have no hope. God forbid I should say it, or imply it; it is far from my real feeling, and from the settled persuasion of my mind. I have every hope still of the Church of England: it were to be most thankless not to acknowledge from the heart, that the “good works”

⁵ Appendix C.

of the Church are on the increase; and it may not therefore be doubted that the "faith" of the Church is on the increase also. But still, if it had not been most unworthy and imperfect in the sight of God, there could have been no room or opportunity for a decision like this. And yet must we not live in that spirit of charity which "hopeth all things?" True it is that in respect of doctrine we are "neither hot nor cold." True it is that we are therefore in the utmost peril. True it is that the powers of Satan and of the world are leagued against the truth; but God warns us still. I cannot think we shall refuse to hear. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." I cannot think we shall refuse to hear. I have seen much lately of all classes and degrees of men, both Clergy and laity; and there is among them all,—oh may we be taught by the Spirit to be more and more thankful for the long-suffering of God,—there is among them all so strong a sense of the danger; so deep-seated a determination to meet it, by God's help, and in God's strength, as best they may, that I cannot allow myself to doubt the issue, even though I may not be permitted to live to see it with my own eyes.

Meantime, it is my humble prayer that I may be allowed, as one of the least worthy of God's servants, to devote myself in body and in soul, if need be, so long as I shall live, to the endeavour to assist

in blotting out that foul stain which has now, for the first time, been fixed *by authority* upon the pure faith of the Church of England; to devote to this end my time, my means, my energies, all the talents of whatsoever kind which have been committed to me of God. That I may be allowed to labour unceasingly in faith and patience for this great end; and if it be God's will that the struggle shall extend beyond the number of my days, that I may in the like faith and patience be content to die.

When the holy season, before which we are entering now, is past, those of us all, Clergy and laity, whom God shall spare to live, will be called to leave nothing undone by which they may lawfully assist in freeing the Church of England from all participation in the guilt of the late judgment. Meantime let us add humiliation to humiliation, and prayer to prayer, that God will "not deal with us after our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities;" but that He will make us, all unworthy as we are, humble instruments in His hands for the upholding of the truth, and for handing it down to our children even as we have received it from the Church; but, by His blessing, more confirmed and established in our hearts and minds through the very dangers which do now assail it; and standing forth in clearer and brighter light, when the dark cloud which has come between it and the eyes of this people, shall at His bidding have passed away.

The Church of England is under trial, under a

special trial, to see whether she will maintain the Catholic Faith. It may be it is the last trial that will be vouchsafed to her of God.

Who shall say that it is not a solemn and awful crisis, for all that Christians ought most to love and value is now at stake? God be thanked, it is also a simple matter; one which a plain man may readily understand. It will be well, and an acceptable sign that we do not refuse to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches," if parish after parish shall raise its voice, and declare that they will not, so far as in them lies, that they will not, by God's help, and in God's strength, permit themselves to be robbed of their great inheritance,—of that precious certainty whereby "the remission of sins" is sealed unto the little ones of the flock of Christ, in Holy Baptism.

APPENDIX.

A.

Protest A.]

In the Name of the Most Holy Trinity.—Amen.

I. Whereas the Universal Church alone possesses, by the commission and command of its Divine Founder, the power of defining in matter of doctrine; and, subject to the same, the Church of England alone possesses, within its sphere, the power of interpreting and declaring the intention of such definitions as the Universal Church has framed;—

II. And whereas a power to interpret formularies of the Church by a final judicial sentence, the Synods of the Church not being, in practice, admitted to declare the doctrine of the Church, becomes in effect a power to declare and make such interpretations binding upon the Church;—

III. And whereas by the suit of *Gorham v. the Bishop of Exeter*, as well as by the case of *Escott v. Mastin* in the year 1842, it appears that the Crown, through a Court constituted by Act of Parliament alone, claims and exercises a power to confirm, reverse, or vary, by a final judicial sentence, the decisions and interpretations of the Courts of the Church in matters of doctrine;—

IV. And whereas in the present state of the law nothing hinders but that an interpretation, which shall have been judged to be unsound by the Courts of the Church, may

be finally declared to be sound by the said Judicial Committee; or that a person, who shall have been judged to be unfit for cure of souls by the spiritual tribunal, may be declared to be fit for cure of souls by the civil power;—

V. And whereas the existence of such state of the law cannot be reconciled with the Divine constitution and office of the Church, and is contrary to the law of Christ;—

VI. And whereas the exercise of power in such matters, under such state of the law, endangers the public maintenance of the Faith of Christ;—

VII. And whereas the existence of such a state of things is a grievance of conscience;—

VIII. And whereas no judgment pronounced by the Judicial Committee of Privy Council, in respect of matters of doctrine, can be accepted by the Church;—

I, George Anthony Denison, Clerk, M.A., Vicar of East Brent, in the county of Somerset, and Diocese of Bath and Wells, do hereby enter my solemn Protest against the state of the law which empowers the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to take cognizance of matters of doctrine, and against the exercise of that power by the said Judicial Committee in each particular case; and I do hereby pledge myself to use all lawful means within my reach to prevent the continuance of such state of the law, and of the power claimed and exercised under the same.

(Signed)

GEORGE ANTHONY DENISON.

EAST BRENT, *4th Sunday in Lent*,
March 10, 1850.

[Read in the Vestry of the Parish Church of East Brent, in the presence of one of the Churchwardens and of other witnesses, and copies delivered to the Churchwardens, and transmitted to the Bishop, Sunday, March 10, 1850.]

Protest B.]

In the Name of the Most Holy Trinity.—Amen.

I. Whereas the Church of England is a branch of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church, and, in virtue thereof, holds, absolutely and exclusively, all the Doctrines of the Catholic Faith;—

II. And whereas George Cornelius Gorham, Clerk, B.D., Priest of the Church of England, has formally denied the Catholic Faith in respect of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism;—

III. And whereas the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has—in the case of *Gorham v. Bishop of Exeter*—reversed the judgment of the Church Court, and has pronounced, by final sentence, the said George Cornelius Gorham to be fit to be instituted by the Bishop to a benefice with cure of souls;—

IV. And whereas such sentence is necessarily false;—

V. And whereas such sentence gives public legal sanction to the teaching of false doctrine, and therein and thereby has a great and manifest tendency to lead into error of doctrine, or to encourage to persevere in error of doctrine, or to plunge finally into heresy, all such as are tempted, in one degree or another, to deny the Faith of Christ in respect of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism;—

VI. And whereas such sentence does injury and dishonour to Christ and to His Holy Church;—

VII. And whereas all, who, with a full knowledge of the intent, meaning, and purpose of such sentence, are, or shall be, concerned in promulging or executing it, and all who, with a like knowledge, shall approve of, or acquiesce in, it, are, or will be, involved in heresy;—

VIII. And whereas it has become necessary—in consequence of such sentence—that the Church of England should free herself from any participation in the guilt thereof, by proceeding, *without delay*, to make some

further formal declaration in respect of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism;—

I, George Anthony Denison, Clerk, M.A., Vicar of East Brent, in the county of Somerset, and Diocese of Bath and Wells, do hereby enter my solemn Protest against the said sentence of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and do warn all the Christian people of this parish to beware of allowing themselves to be moved or influenced thereby in the least degree; and I do also hereby pledge myself to use all lawful means within my reach to assist in obtaining, without delay, some further formal declaration, by a lawful Synod of the Church of England, as to what is, and what is not, the doctrine of the Church of England in respect of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism.

(Signed)

GEORGE ANTHONY DENISON.

EAST BRENT, *4th Sunday in Lent*,
March 10, 1850.

[Read in the Vestry of the Parish Church of East Brent, in the presence of one of the Churchwardens and of other witnesses, and copies delivered to the Churchwardens, and transmitted to the Bishop, Sunday, March 10, 1850.]

B.

Copy.

22, GREAT GEORGE-STREET, WESTMINSTER,
March 18th, 1850.

MY LORD,

I have taken the great liberty—I trust you will think it a pardonable one—of addressing direct to your Lordship the enclosed formal Statement in reference to the allegation that I deny the Supremacy of the Crown, as the head of the Established Church—contained in Mr. Hume's

notice of a question to be put by him this evening in the House of Commons.

I have the honour to be,
 My Lord,
 Your Lordship's obedient, faithful servant,
 GEORGE ANTHONY DENISON.

The Lord John Russell, &c. &c.

STATEMENT. [Read by Lord John Russell in the House of Commons, Monday, March 18th, 1850.]

I *have not* denied, and *do not* deny, that the Queen's Majesty is Supreme Governor of this Church and Realm, and is, in virtue thereof, supreme over all causes Ecclesiastical and Civil, judging in causes spiritual by the Judges of the Spirituality, and in causes temporal by temporal Judges, as enacted by the Statute 24 Hen. VIII. c. 12.

And I *have not* impeached, and *do not* impeach, any part of the Royal Supremacy as set forth in the second Canon, and in the thirty-seventh Article of our Church.

But I humbly conceive that the Constitution does not attribute to the Crown, without a Synod lawfully assembled, the right of deciding a question of Doctrine; and this—although disclaimed by the Lords of the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council—is what, as appears to me, has been done, indirectly indeed, but unequivocally, in the late case of *Gorham v. the Bishop of Exeter*.

(Signed) GEORGE ANTHONY DENISON.

22, GREAT GEORGE-STREET, WESTMINSTER,
 March 18, 1850.

C.

RESOLUTIONS.

I. That whatever, at the present time, be the force of the sentence delivered on Appeal in the case of *Gorham v. the Bishop of Exeter*, the Church of England will eventually be bound by the said sentence, unless it shall openly and expressly reject the erroneous doctrine sanctioned thereby.

II. That the remission of original sin to all infants in, and by the grace of, Baptism, is an essential part of the Article, "One Baptism for the remission of sins."

III. That—to omit other questions raised by the said sentence—such sentence, while it does not deny the liberty of holding that Article in the sense heretofore received, does equally sanction the assertion that original sin is a bar to the right reception of Baptism, and is not remitted except when God bestows regeneration beforehand by an act of prevenient grace, (whereof Holy Scripture and the Church are wholly silent,) thereby rendering the benefits of Holy Baptism altogether uncertain and precarious.

IV. That to admit the lawfulness of holding an exposition of an Article of the Creed, contradictory of the essential meaning of that Article, is, in truth and in fact, to abandon that Article.

V. That, inasmuch as the Faith is one, and rests upon one principle of authority, the conscious, deliberate, and wilful abandonment of the essential meaning of an Article of the Creed, destroys the Divine Foundation upon which alone the entire Faith is propounded by the Church.

VI. That any portion of the Church which does so abandon the essential meaning of an Article of the Creed,

forfeits, not only the Catholic doctrine in that Article, but also the office and authority to witness and teach as a Member of the Universal Church.

VII. That, by such conscious, wilful, and deliberate act, such portion of the Church becomes formally separated from the Catholic body, and can no longer assure to its Members the Grace of the Sacraments and the Remission of Sins.

VIII. That all measures consistent with the present legal position of the Church ought to be taken without delay, to obtain an authoritative declaration by the Church of the doctrine of Holy Baptism, impugned by the recent sentence: as, for instance, by praying licence for the Church in Convocation to declare that doctrine: or by obtaining an Act of Parliament, to give legal effect to the decisions of the collective Episcopate on this and all other matters purely spiritual.

IX. That, failing such measures, all efforts must be made to obtain from the said Episcopate, acting only in its spiritual character, a re-affirmation of the doctrine of Holy Baptism, impugned by the said sentence.

H. E. MANNING, M.A., Archdeacon of Chichester.

ROBERT J. WILBERFORCE, M.A., Archdeacon of the East Riding.

THOMAS THORP, B.D., Archdeacon of Bristol.

W. H. MILL, B.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge.

E. B. PUSEY, D.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew, Oxford.

JOHN KEBLE, M.A., Vicar of Hursley.

W. DODSWORTH, M.A., Perpetual Curate of Christ Church, St. Pancras.

WILLIAM J. E. BENNETT, M.A., Perpetual Curate of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge.

HENRY WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, M.A., Vicar of East Farleigh.

JOHN C. TALBOT, M.A., Barrister at Law.

RICHARD CAVENDISH, M.A.

EDWARD BADELEY, M.A., Barrister at Law.

JAMES R. HOPE, D.C.L., Barrister at Law.

GEORGE ANTHONY DENISON, M.A., Vicar of East
Brent.

THE END.





